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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Korea

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT Conditions in the 38th Parallel Area

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. The North Korean army has battalions along the border between North and South Korea controlling the important crossing points. Headquarters for these units are the county seats Chorwon (127-12, 38-14), Hwachon (127-42, 38-06), Yangyang (128-38, 38-04) in Kangwon Province and Haeju (125-42, 38-02) and Kumchon (126-28, 38-10) in Hwanghae Province. The Chorwon battalion is commanded by a Major PAK (朴烈); the Yonchon (127-04, 38-06) unit, by Major KANG Chae-ho (康在鎬). Commanders are constantly shifted. The border is defended by a double line of pillboxes, some of which are being constructed by local labor.
2. In addition to military forces, the Bureau of Internal Affairs maintains a special Peace Preservation Battalion with headquarters at Yonchon. This unit extends the length of the border and checks the political affiliations of all persons crossing over. Local "Self Defense" units have also been organized as a civil militia for emergency use. Although these groups are not normally mobilized, they are expected to observe suspicious individuals at all times and if necessary turn them over to the Bureau of Internal Affairs.
3. A system of guest registration, common throughout North Korea, is more strict in the border area, where guests must be registered with the local office of the Bureau of Internal Affairs within three hours after arrival. A code of mutual responsibility makes each group of five families responsible for any single failure to register a guest. By the end of June 1949, four groups (twenty families) in Yonchon had been charged with violations.
4. Arrests for political reasons are reported by radio, by either the military or police, to the Intelligence Section of the Ministry of Interior in Pyongyang. Radio stations for such purposes are in Yangyang, Hwachon, Yonchon, Chongok (approximately 127-10, 38-01), Wang Jing Myon (16 kilometers southwest of the county seat of Yonchon County), Kumchon, and Haeju.
5. The emigration of persons along the parallel from North to South Korea has left some vacant housing. Although new residents moved in, these were not allowed to settle in any townships except those of the county seats. Disturbances and border raids in early 1949 also caused some inhabitants to withdraw to other areas.

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